



College Ambition Program

Navigating the College-Going Process

September 2012 – May 2013

Audience

In 2012-2013, the College Ambition Program (CAP) served 5,269 students in seven urban and rural high schools in the greater Lansing area. These schools all have lower than average postsecondary enrollment rates.

Funding

The National Science Foundation: \$1.275 million/3 years

Objectives

CAP is a whole-school intervention designed to promote a college-going culture where students can visualize themselves in college and expect to attend a postsecondary institution, with their school administrators, teachers, and parents sharing these expectations. CAP is also designed to encourage and prepare high school students to pursue college and professional careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). **CAP provides resources and support to help ALL high school students in CAP schools plan for and navigate the path into college.**

Description

CAP is comprised of four primary components:

1. **Mentoring and Tutoring**
2. **Course Counseling and Advising**
3. **Financial Aid Planning**
4. **College Visits**

Mentoring and Tutoring

In the fall of 2012, 50 undergraduate and graduate MSU students volunteered to serve as mentors and were trained through CAP. A total of 36 mentors served in the spring of 2013. Mentors volunteered for weekly sessions of at least one hour, although some mentors participated more than one day per week or served for more than one hour in a given session. Over the course of the 2012-2013 school year mentors spent a total of 923 contact hours tutoring and advising on college related issues.

Course Counseling and Advising

Students, teachers, and parents were invited to participate in CAP workshops to receive a better understanding of topics related to college preparation, enrollment, and persistence. One of the resources available on the CAP website (www.collegeambition.org) is the *Ten Steps to College*, which can be viewed chronologically or independently depending on the needs of the student.

Financial Aid Planning

CAP site coordinators encourage students and parents to attend financial aid workshops and seminars and to learn about college costs and ways to finance their students' education. This resource is available for all students and parents within CAP high schools and includes information about: the cost of college; paying for college; websites that have calculators and advice; how financial aid is calculated and disbursed; institutional scholarships; how to apply for aid and scholarships; early decision/early action applications; and how to understand financial aid awards once a student receives them. CAP works with each high school and local community to encourage students and parents to participate in financial aid workshops and planning throughout the school year.

College Visits

In 2012-2013 CAP provided opportunities for students to visit nine different colleges across Michigan in an effort to build the college-going culture within CAP schools. College visits place students onto campuses and allow them to experience a college environment. CAP organized and arranged for participating high school students to visit Alma College, Aquinas College, Central Michigan University, Grand Valley State University, and Western Michigan University. In spring 2013, trips were taken to Marygrove College, Michigan State University, Olivet College, and Wayne State University. These visits include activities such as presentations on program offerings, financial aid information, student activities/organizations, scholarship information, and profiles of admitted students. Following the presentation, students were given a walking tour of the campus, stopping at points of interest such as residence halls, recreation centers, academic halls, student services, and libraries. Each visit concluded with student reflections which were collected from all participants.

In total, 321 students attended at least one college visit. Meals were provided on campuses, giving high school students the opportunity to dine in a college dorm cafeteria with current college students.

Outcomes

There has been a 6% difference in college going rates at four-year institutions between CAP and similar non-CAP schools for the 2011-2012 school year. Outcome data are not yet available for the 2012-2013 school year.

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CAP web site - <http://collegeambition.org/>

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